

RED EMERALD STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2023



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guiding and facilitating the
development of this strategic plan.
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OVERVIEW

WHAT IS THE RED EMERALD STRATEGY?

The Red Emerald Strategy is an internal guiding document to help us — The Utah Office of Tourism — prioritize our promotional and product development efforts toward creating Utah travel experiences that are rarefied, distinctive, unique to Utah and highly coveted. The principles in the Red Emerald Strategy focus on attracting quality visitation, which means shaping traveler itineraries to promote longer stays, increased spending, dispersed visitation throughout the state and deeper engagement with local communities. This strategy also champions a community-led vision for tourism development.

This strategic plan contains our guiding principles for the Red Emerald Strategy. First introduced at the Utah Tourism Conference in September 2017, this strategy has quickly become the tool for prioritizing our internal efforts and aligning with stakeholders.

As the Utah Office of Tourism (UOT) embarks on the next phase of our Red Emerald Strategy, we ensure that our efforts remain true to what drives us and who we are as an organization. The following foundations of our organization serve as a north star to remind us of our purpose and keep us on course to the benefit of all Utahns.

VISION

A state united in welcoming the world to experience soul-awakening adventure.

MISSION

Our mission is to elevate life in Utah through responsible tourism stewardship.

VALUES

- **Creativity:** We approach all of our efforts with a desire to continually challenge ourselves. We believe in the value of our creative contributions. This imparts meaning and vitality to our work, significance to each day and fulfillment to our lives.
- **Teamwork:** We take pride in our co-workers' achievements as we would our own. Working well with each other is a cornerstone to the Utah Office of Tourism's success.
- **Family:** Our families constitute our center and the balance in our lives. We recognize our responsibility to those who love and depend on us is above all else. The concept of family begins at home and extends to our co-workers, with whom we share time and interests.
- **Integrity:** We take pride in our work under the guidance of our moral compass, which reminds us to be of positive service to our co-workers, partners, clients and customers.
- **Respect:** We provide the same attention to others that we would like to receive. When we strive to see the good in others and help them become the best that they can be, we know that this is the path to achieving our very best.

POSITION

We achieve our mission through:

- **Marketing:** We curate messaging that inspires visitation, supports local businesses and builds the Utah economy.
- **Stewardship:** We distribute visitation statewide and support the responsible discovery of Utah.
- **Development:** We partner with local communities to enhance and develop their visitor economies to benefit residents and visitors.

About the name:

The Wah Wah mountains of western Utah are one of the only places in the world to find red emeralds. Also known as Red Beryl, these rare and highly coveted gemstones are found in Utah and New Mexico, but only grow to any substantial size in Utah. They are distinctive, rare and highly sought after, prized by gemologists



PRIORITIZE QUALITY VISITATION, NOT SIMPLY QUANTITY OF VISITORS

We aim to attract and support visitors who travel thoughtfully and engage with local communities and businesses in order to create more memorable experiences. In most cases, this equates to longer visits and increased spending. Society places a tremendous emphasis on packing more into our already busy lives — more emails, social updates, meetings, personal commitments — and this can lead to many short, superficial interactions throughout our lives. Travel to Utah can be a powerful antidote to stress and busyness by encouraging people to slow down, unplug and appreciate grand spaces, subtle details and focused time with the people they love.

For travel to Utah to have the greatest impact on our visitors, our marketing materials, recommended itineraries and customer service interactions should guide visitors toward a more deliberate pace of travel, staying longer and having a deeper connection with the places they visit. In addition to improving the quality of the visitor experience, this will increase traveler’s economic impact through longer stays and additional services, including guides, classes and add-on experiences.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase average spend by trip
- Increase average length of stay
- Increase Utah’s share of (focused) global markets

INITIATIVES

Develop micro-campaigns tailored to emerging niche audiences and experiences (e.g. biking, culture, beer)

Travel trends and visitor perceptions indicate that Utah has opportunities to capitalize on growing niche travel segments. In the Utah market, visitor affinity for mountain biking options, beer tourism and cultural/heritage sites are just a few examples of niche markets where the state can focus its efforts to target visitors seeking these unique experiences. Visitors attracted to these niche markets fit certain definitions of a quality visit.

Evaluate opportunities and impacts of increasing focus on targeted international markets

International markets are key in the pursuit of quality visitation, as international travelers spend more time and money in market. In today’s visitor economy, competition for the international traveler is increasing. New markets are emerging, and social media and targeted marketing are driving discovery of these markets more quickly than ever before. Additionally, as economies, exchange rates and consumer confidence shift, so do international market opportunities. This initiative addresses Utah’s need to evaluate current opportunities within legacy and emerging international markets to ensure international marketing dollars are being directed at opportunities with the highest returns.

Be an industry leader in responsible visitation education and messaging (e.g. Leave No Trace)

As Utah grows as a destination and more visitors come, it is increasingly important to manage Utah’s tourism assets, communities and cultures. Ensuring that Utah visitors are aware of and educated in proper ways to engage in responsible visitation, respect Utah’s communities and minimize their impact on the state’s natural resources is an important step in managing the destination. Increasing education and awareness on the proper treatment of Utah’s tourism product will help maintain and sustain Utah’s experience for generations to come — for residents and visitors alike.

DISTRIBUTE VISITATION

Several places in Utah experience crowded conditions during specific time periods or events (e.g. powder days in the canyons and summer weekends at national parks). This can negatively impact the visitor experience, the quality of life for residents and create a negative perception for Utah tourism as a whole. These are all significant risks to the future of Utah’s tourism industry. The Road to Mighty® campaign was created as a first step toward dispersing visitation among top destinations and experiences around The Mighty 5®, but we can do more.

Beyond the marquee parks and monuments, there are parts of the state that are home to profound, hyper-local experiences that are the backbone of the Red Emerald Strategy — the hidden gems. These less-visited parts of the state have ample capacity and are only beginning to build their tourism economies and welcome new visitors. While these alternative destinations do not yet have the visitor amenities to be a direct replacement for our busiest destinations, there are niche travelers drawn to these destinations thanks to remarkable birding, fly-fishing, biking, arts, paleontology, stargazing, ATV riding and other experiences. By matching the right visitor with the right information and mindset to the right place, we can significantly broaden the range of destinations and experiences we promote to distribute travelers to all parts of Utah.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase non-peak season room nights in target regions
- Increase year-round nights in target regions

INITIATIVES

Establish common tourism identities to inform the distribution of visitation and create compelling visitor offerings

Utah is home to a myriad of visitor segments, tourism assets, itineraries and communities. Understanding how visitors move through Utah and why they choose the experiences they do is key to implementing the most effective and impactful distribution tactics. Assigning tourism identities to specific groups and travel patterns simplifies distribution strategies within specific groups, while helping identify off-the-beaten-path experiences that potentially appeal to each tourism identity. Targeting visitor segments with tailored distribution strategies helps visitors linger longer and disperse travelers to less-known places.

Employ destination development to inform and leverage marketing and regional travel successes

As travelers explore beyond high-visitation areas, other destinations in Utah will need to prepare for those travelers and manage tourism amenities, resources, experiences and impacts. Encouraging regional collaboration among destinations will help to maximize limited resources, lessen visitor impacts, spread economic benefits and provide a seamless experience for visitors. UOT will support and celebrate local destination development efforts through its marketing and messaging outreach.

Pursue opportunities to increase flexibility in marketing allocations

Changing travel trends, visitor segments and an evolving Utah tourism experience requires flexibility across all UOT resources. A change in UOT’s marketing allocation guidelines might allow the state to better influence demand across varying regions, each with their own unique needs and opportunities, while more agile marketing guidelines might allow UOT to more effectively distribute visitation across the state — supporting continued demand in its most popular places, while planting the seeds of discovery in more unknown areas. The purpose of this initiative is to review the current marketing fund allocations and make a recommendation for necessary updates, if any.

Prioritize opportunities to effectively promote visitor-aligned off-the-beaten-path experiences (e.g. rural, urban, tribal, state parks)

The Mighty 5® continues to be a world class visitor experience, with second-to-none natural landscapes and wonders. In between these valuable assets lie unknown adventures, undiscovered communities and unexpected cultural experiences. These off-the-beaten path experiences provide opportunity to a growing traveler segment seeking unique and uncrowded adventures. UOT is committed to leveraging these experiences as a means to distribute visitation across the state and its communities.



CONTINUE POWERFUL BRANDING

We've embraced our role as destination curators and illustrative storytellers, and visitors have responded. Much of our recent success has been driven by capturing the rare and authentic essence of Utah travel opportunities and by engaging visitors through powerful imagery, emotionally resonant stories, niche itineraries and marketing.

These efforts are the core of The Mighty 5® and The Greatest Snow On Earth®, important focal points that will continue to be foundational elements of Utah's brand and iconic draws for travelers. Because these campaigns encompass the anchor experiences and destinations in Utah, we will continue to capitalize on the equity in these brands to further our success in all elements of the Red Emerald Strategy.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase brand awareness
- Improve positive social sentiment

INITIATIVES

Propagate new brand positioning throughout UOT content and cascade to partners

The Utah Office of Tourism has established a strong brand over the last decade. Its work on The Mighty 5® and branding Utah's world class ski experience has cemented Utah in the minds of those seeking their own adventure. Ensuring continued awareness of the Utah brand is imperative to continuing to stay top-of-mind among travelers and remain relevant in an increasingly competitive market. A first step in this process is propagating Utah's new brand position throughout the content of UOT, its partners and relevant stakeholders. This will ensure Utah is represented in a consistent manner across as many touch-points as possible, increasing recall and promoting broader brand awareness of Life Elevated®.

Launch in-state brand strategies to foster local pride in Life Elevated

Residents are the front line of the visitor experience and helping them to embrace both the visitor economy and Utah's Life Elevated® brand will serve to improve the visitor experience and make it more consistent. UOT can use its marketing expertise to effectively communicate its brand to this very important constituency and help them communicate it to visitors.

Pursue campaigns to grow external positive brand sentiment, while correcting misperceptions

Social perception studies highlighted areas where visitor and resident perception do not match Utah's ideal culture and tourism experience. Understanding that perception precedes reality, UOT is committing to taking steps to leverage areas of positive brand sentiment, while correcting negative brand perceptions. Areas of emphasis include leaning into positive perceptions of Utah's accommodations and dining experiences, and a growing interest in beer tourism, while correcting perceptions of Utah not being welcoming to all visitors.

ENABLE COMMUNITY-LED VISITOR READINESS

We recognize the potential for tourism to have a negative impact on the environment and social fabric of tourist regions. We will work vigorously to avoid such an outcome. We see our marketing work being implemented in collaboration with a community, not to it. We invite communities to take the lead role in defining how they would like their community promoted, identifying whom they would like to attract and determining how much tourism is right for their economic development plans and community character.

Increasingly, the high-quality visits we are focusing on attract visitors who seek out authentic local traditions, places and cultures, and who want to visit communities that residents deeply value and celebrate. In this way, we see tourism contributing to community character and quality of life, supplementing a community's diversified economic development plans and helping to celebrate local traditions, craftspeople and artists. Additionally, we want to ensure that communities are ready to receive the visitation they aspire to create. It is not enough to simply align on promotion, but to support the curation of the visitor experience through expanded access to hospitality training and connection to alternative resources that help communities go beyond destination marketing.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase UOT's Earned Partnership Value (EPV) average score year over year
- Increase positive stakeholder / resident sentiment

INITIATIVES

Engage our industry in identifying needs related to visitor readiness

As visitation has grown, it has exposed visitor readiness needs in communities across the state. However, it is difficult for UOT to have a global view of this from Salt Lake City. Therefore, a stakeholder-driven statewide effort is called for to identify the most critical visitor readiness gaps and devise plans to address them.

Educate residents on the value of tourism

Tourism is an important economic driver and it provides tax revenues that fund a variety of functions, services and amenities in the state. As a result, it is increasingly imperative for Utahns to understand tourism's role in ensuring quality of life for all Utahns. We seek to create champions of tourism in every community by providing compelling, relevant education on the value of tourism. This will help to ensure tourism continues to be a viable input to our state's economy and way of life, while simultaneously building support among Utah's biggest stakeholder, its residents.

Facilitate access to industry-leading training, programs and resources (examples: hospitality and visitor management; destination development; education on available research; online review management; frontline training)

A well-functioning tourism industry is supported by the sum of its stakeholders. Understanding resources can be limited to many tourism entities, UOT is committed to helping stakeholders access important training, programs and resources. Accessing these opportunities can help stakeholders effectively promote and manage their destinations, while building industry-leading capabilities across the state.

Access to incentive/assistance programs to local tourism-oriented businesses

More often than not, the potential of a destination is limited by funding. While many alternative funding streams and incentive programs exist, they can be cumbersome and time-intensive, stretching already limited capacity in local tourism organizations. Facilitating access to alternative funding streams will be an important tool in helping Utah communities improve their tourism infrastructure and promote their destinations.



IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

At the Utah Office of Tourism, we seek to provide industry-leading service and engagement to Utah's tourism stakeholders. Yet, we understand our ability to add value to Utah's visitor economy is only possible if the organization itself is fit and ready for service. The tourism industry itself has changed dramatically over the last decade, requiring organizations to be agile and continuously seek improvement.

We will begin to assess our organization's position in this modernizing industry to ensure we are in the best, most advantageous position possible to drive impact. This includes assessing programs, processes and organizational capabilities to understand efficiency opportunities, evaluate gaps and create solutions that are most valuable to Utah's tourism industry and economy.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase employee net promoter scores
- Increase employee engagement in targeted areas
- Increase whole system scores in targeted areas

INITIATIVES

Prioritize and streamline UOT programs and efforts to increase efficiency and strategic impact

As organizations grow and markets evolve, it is important to evaluate, prioritize and streamline legacy programming and efforts to ensure continued efficacy. These exercises can also help free up internal capacity and direct it at more effective actions.

Evaluate and adapt organizational structure to support industry need and organizational strategy (e.g. Destination Management)

An organization's structure should evolve along with the needs of the industries or markets it supports. The growth of tourism in Utah has created new opportunities and challenges for UOT to address, and an evaluation of its structure is required to ensure the continued, effective support of the industry and its stakeholders. This evaluation will also assess the structure's alignment with the strategies laid out in this plan.

Evaluate and implement opportunities to strengthen cross-functional communication and collaboration (e.g. Asana, All-Staffs, etc.)

As structures evolve for efficiency and impact, so should communication and collaboration tools. Ensuring a UOT that is aligned in action and direction through effective communication and collaboration should help the agency to serve Utah's tourism industry in a more efficient manner. Additionally, as internal communications improve, so will external communications, creating a more aware and engaged stakeholder base.

Evaluate and refine key UOT systems and processes

Clear processes and systems are important for any organization. UOT recognizes the need to evaluate key processes directly related to their value delivery. This assessment is designed to complement other efforts to free up capacity and deliver on more value-add activities while increasing employee engagement and effectiveness.

RED EMERALD STRATEGIC PLAN



VISION	MISSION	VALUES	POSITION
A state united in welcoming the world to experience soul-awakening adventure.	Our mission is to elevate life in Utah through responsible tourism stewardship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creativity• Teamwork• Family• Integrity• Respect	<p>We achieve our mission through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marketing: We curate messaging that inspires visitation, supports local businesses and builds the Utah economy• Stewardship: We distribute visitation statewide and support the responsible discovery of Utah• Development: We partner with local communities to enhance and develop their visitor economies to benefit residents and visitors
IMPERATIVES	OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVES	
Prioritize Quality Visitation, Not Simply Quantity of Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase average spend by trip• Increase average length of stay• Increase Utah’s share of (focused) global markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop micro-campaigns tailored to emerging niche audiences and experiences (e.g. biking, culture, beer)• Evaluate opportunities and impacts of increasing focus on targeted international markets• Be an industry leader in responsible visitation education and messaging (e.g. Leave No Trace)	
Distribute Visitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase non-peak season room nights in target regions• Increase year-round nights in target regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish common tourism identities to inform the distribution of visitation and create compelling visitor offerings• Employ destination development to inform and leverage marketing and regional travel successes• Pursue opportunities to increase flexibility in marketing allocations• Prioritize opportunities to effectively promote visitor-aligned off-the-beaten-path experiences (e.g. rural, urban, tribal, state parks)	
Continue Powerful Branding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase brand awareness• Improve positive social sentiment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Propagate new brand positioning throughout UOT content and cascade to partners• Launch in-state brand strategies to foster local pride in Life Elevated®• Pursue campaigns to grow external positive brand sentiment, while correcting misperceptions	
Enable Community-Led Visitor Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase UOT’s Earned Partnership Value (EPV) average score year over year• Increase positive stakeholder/ resident sentiment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage our industry in identifying needs related to visitor readiness• Educate residents on the value of tourism• Facilitate access to industry-leading training, programs and resources (examples: hospitality and visitor management; destination development; education on available research; online review management; frontline training)• Access to incentive/assistance programs to local tourism-oriented businesses	
Improve Organizational Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase employee net promoter scores• Increase employee engagement in targeted areas• Increase whole system scores in targeted areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritize and streamline UOT programs and efforts to increase efficiency and strategic impact• Evaluate and adapt organizational structure to support industry need and organizational strategy (e.g. Destination Management)• Evaluate and implement opportunities to strengthen cross-functional communication and collaboration (e.g. Asana, All-Staffs, etc.)• Evaluate and refine key UOT systems and processes	